

ADRIENNE

MARY

ISABEL

WYMORE

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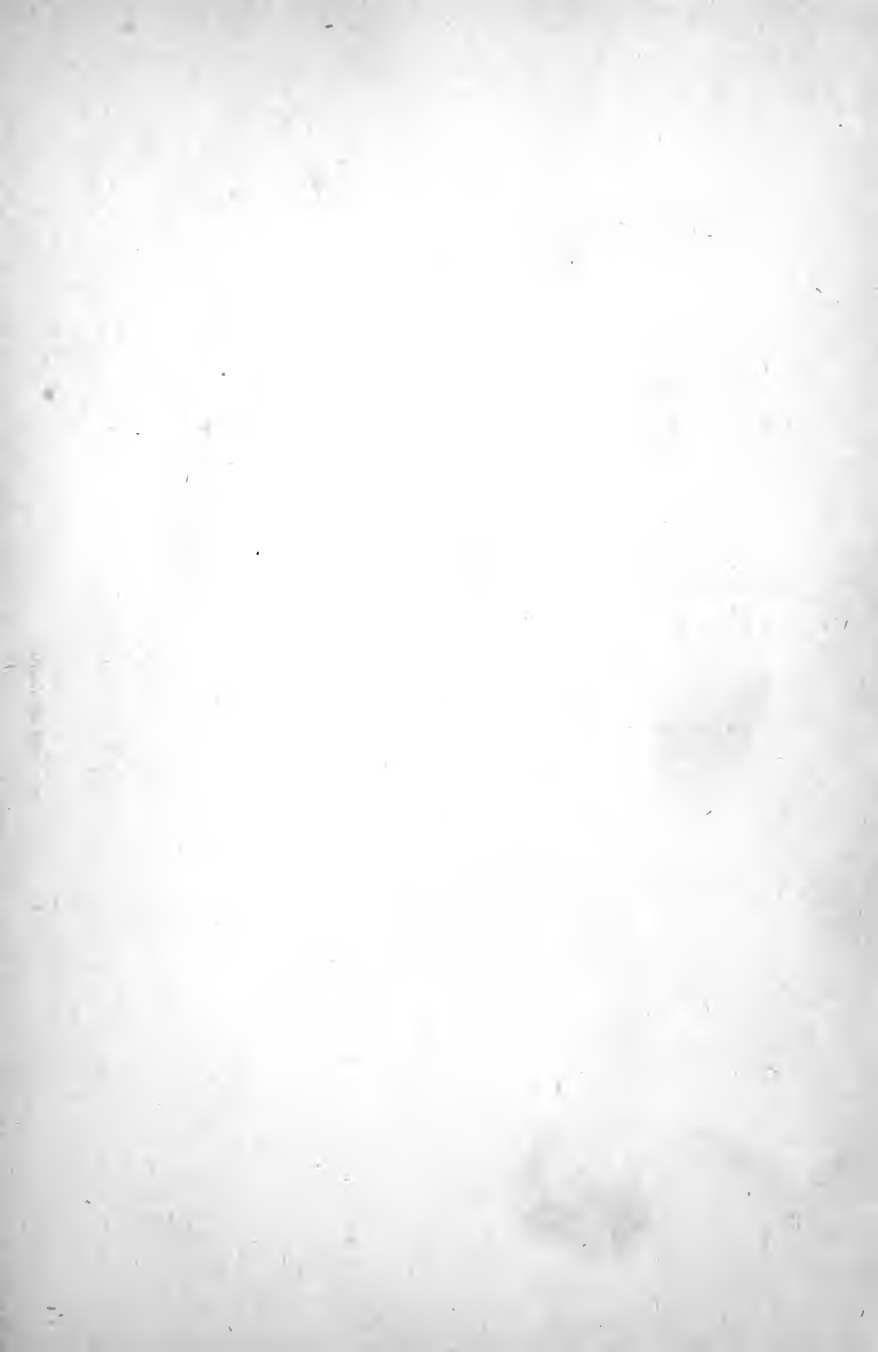


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ADRIENNE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

MARY ISABEL WYMORE



BOSTON

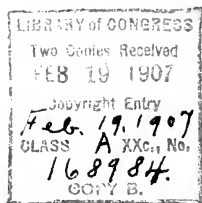
RICHARD G. BADGER

The Gorham Press

1907

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The Gorham Press, Boston

TO MY TRUE FRIEND

To her whose kind sympathy and aid have been the inspiration of this work—I dedicate these poems.

*“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.”—Wordsworth.*

These poems are arranged in the order in which they were written, thus making an unbroken chain in the development of an idea.

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ADRIENNE

'Tis a simple tale, a tale of the sea,
And if, as ye read, it seems to be
More than an idle tale, then take
It as murmurings strange that the waters make,—
Voices heard in the sounding waves,
Rising from deep-hid ocean caves.
Interpret the story as ye will,
'Tis only a simple sea-tale still.

I

Once there lived by the surging sea
A maiden wondrous fair;
White as the very sea-foam was she,
Like the sun her shining hair.
And nothing she did the livelong day
But sit beside the surge;
And e'en when the storm-winds flung the spray,
Still clung she to the verge.
Though the booming swell
In thunder spoke;
Though blinding fell
The rain, and broke
The waves on the rocky shore:
Still she dreamed there evermore.
But the sea-gulls thick around her flying
Hoarsely were ever their warning crying;
"Adrienne, Adrienne,
Oh, when, oh, when
Will you wake and cease your dreaming?"

And they hovered and ducked and soared on high,
And swooped upon her with their cry,
And filled the air with screaming.
But Adrienne, unheeding, kept
Her eyes fixed on the sea,
Though all around the tempest swept,
And the white-caps tossed in glee.

II

There, ever and ever, day on day,
The lonely maiden sat,
Yearning and wishing and longing aye
For something, she knew not what.
In all things as a child was she;
A spirit bright but lone,
She had never tasted misery,
No grief had she ever known
Save the mystic silence that bound her close,
And the wind that breathed of love,
And the longings, unbid, that within her rose,
And the calls of the birds above:
“Adrienne, Adrienne,
Oh, when, oh, when
Will you cease your idle dreaming?”
For thus the sea-gulls wheeling o’erhead
Were forever and ever screaming;
And the silence in clearer accents said:
“Alas, forever dreaming!”

III

One morn a ship, all ghostly gray,
Came sailing, silently sailing
Out of the west at break of day;
Its top a mist was veiling.
As it nearer drew, it caught the beams
Of the sun, and shone snow-white,
Skimming the glistening breakers, meseems,
Like a bird, with passage light.
On the shore, Adrienne, in wonder bound,
Saw this moving shape come gliding;
And a faint little whisper of joyous sound
Stirred her soul as she saw it sliding
Silently, smoothly, o'er the deep.
No longer her voice was chained in sleep,
But wild 'round the cliff it rang;
For the first, first time, so gladly sweet,
In her nameless joy, she sang,
That willingly sailors their death would meet,—
Entranced as of old by the Siren's tones,—
To hear that voice from amongst the stones.

IV

But suddenly over the sea there rushed
A gale so chilling cold
That the voice of Adrienne was hushed.
The peals of thunder rolled
From cliff to cliff, with awful sound,
Like a giant's mutterings
Of rage; and the wakened waves resound
With sullen roar, that brings

A pallor to the sailor's cheek,
 As by the lightning's glare
 He rises,—in such an hour how weak!—
 The ocean's worst to dare.
 The blackness of twenty nights is come
 O'er the sea, with all it bears,
 And a line of merciless, pounding foam
 With the rocky cliff mad wars.
 There, shrouded in the gathering gloom,
 Her wind-blown tresses flying,
 Her hands outstretched in wild affright,
 Her bright eyes dimmed with crying,
 While the rain beats down on her fair young head,
 And a fitful glare is upon her shed
 By the zigzag lightning playing,
 Stands Adrienne, with wild, wild woe
 Struck mute, and dumbly praying
 All powers that be, above, below,
 To save that ship from its dreadful doom,
 And send once more the grateful light.
 Ah, Adrienne,
 'Twas then, 'twas then
 You awoke from your idle dreaming!
 Adrienne, Adriennne,
 'Twas then, 'twas then,
 With the lightning o'er you streaming!

V

In vain, in vain, that prayer was blown
 Across the raging brine;
 But if God saw fit that the ship go down,
 Adrienne, 'twas no fault of thine.

While the horrible din of cries and groans,
Of shrieks for help, of despairing moans
Of souls wrenched hard away
From the clasp of the wonted clay,
Did with violent agony sway
That slender young form, which the spray
Had drenched with brine; and away
O'er the sea did her hopeless gaze stray,
Straining in wild dismay
To catch, by the lightning's play,
A glimpse of the ship so gray,
Ere it sunk beneath the wave,
To find a watery grave
For the ones she could not save,—
God in mercy cleared away
The clouds, and sent sunny day
O'er waters of purest blue,
Which never a faint trace knew
Of the winds that raged and blew,
And wrecked, within the view
Of the lonely girl, the ship;
And she saw, with quivering lip,
That beneath these ripples fair,
Sparkling in the sunny air,
Down in the waters there,
Was it lying, with all it bare.

VI

Ay, the storm had cleared, and the sun shone red
O'er the breakers white with foam.
How fast the thunderous clouds had sped!—
No slower had they come.

Glad summer took within her fold
 Sea, sky, and land, and all;
No longer the heaving billows rolled,
 No more did the torrents fall.
Only that surface dimpling there,—
 So fair, so calm, so mild,—
Looked as innocent 'neath the golden air
 As if it had never, in wild,
Mad rage sent down to eternal sleep
 The sailors brave who rode
Over its treacherous waters deep,—
 Ah, me!—to their long abode:
Leaving their loved ones behind to weep
 That they ever had dared to confide
 Their lives to the ocean wide.

VII

The maiden knelt on the beach awhile,
 Sobbing in piteous grief;
Then heedless of all the false sea's guilt,
 Sundered from all belief,
She mournfully sank upon the sands,
 And bathed her limbs in the tide;
Wearily looped up the scattered strands
 Of hair, and in sorrow sighed.
So bright a hope had come and gone,
 So glad a dream was o'er,
That the weight of the pain thus thrust upon
 Her, unused as she was, seemed more
 Than her gentle heart could bear;
 So bowed she in despair.

VIII

But as, o'ercome, she lay in pain,
 Good God a blessing sent, as sweet
As a bud of spring, or the gentle rain
 That feeds the bud; for, flung at her feet,
The One lay upon the wave-licked sands,
 His ghastly face upturned;
She softly stroked it with timid hands,
 While the heart within her burned.
She holds him in her tender arms,
 And gazes in mute bliss,
While the cold, cold form she sweetly warms,
 And seals the lids with a kiss.
Once, twice, and thrice, in wond'ring joy,
 She kissed the marble brow
And the golden tresses of the boy,
 And the cheek as white as snow,
While deep love into her lonely soul
Softly, quietly, tenderly stole,
 Bringing its own sweet, brooding peace;
And the smiling sun shed o'er the whole
 His healing beams, nor did he cease
Till he warmed the maiden's kneeling form,
 And lit with a radiant light
 The brow so smooth and white
Of the Beautiful One sent by the storm;
Till at last in mercy there came a wave
 From the heart of the briny deep,
That bore them both to a happy grave
 And the joy of a peaceful sleep.
There, deep in the Ocean's tranquil breast,
 No more to moan or weep,

While the waves their tireless vigils keep,
They are gently lulled to eternal rest.
But where is the soul, a pining guest
While here by the chains of flesh suppressed?

SPRING

Warm is the breath of the South-wind,
Waking in meadow and glade
Sweet little modest blossoms
Timid in sun or shade.

Blue is the sky and smiling;
Calm is the day, and fair;
The woodland music is ringing
Glad in the sunny air.

Spring is born in the meadow,
Spring is born in the glade;
Spring soft plays in the sunshine,
Spring rests cool in the shade.

Through the day and the night-time
Ever one song is sung:
Love is born in its beauty,
Again is the old earth young.

Well may the soul look upward
Through its spiritual eyes,
Far beyond the hazy snow-drifts
And the sunny blue of the skies,

And catch the distant glimmer
Of a land all clothed in light,
Which knows no stormy winter,
And is always equally bright.

There, haply, the pure and the sin-stained
Will mingle glad and free,
See the same glistening rainbow,
Rest 'neath the same green tree,

Breathe the same fragrant odors,
List to the same sweet songs,
And out in Heaven's sunshine
Bury their pains and wrongs:

E'en as the earth, recreated,
With her stains all washed away,
In her beauty pure rejoices
All the soft-rippling day.

When dying eyes are closing,
And faint grows the mortal breath,
And faded and old are the garments
Of flesh, and rigid in death,

Then will the blessed mem'ry
Of Spring in her gladsome green
Steal o'er the dulling senses
With a touch of joy serene;

And, a smile on his face, the dying
Will close his eyes in peace,
Hoping to taste the sweetness
Of a Spring that will never cease.

EGOTISM

“ Hespera, hast thou not noted oft
How now spots, fleecy white and soft,
And dazzling bright in the sun; now clear,
Dark spaces of curious shape, appear,

Which anon are veiled in mist again,
As light or shadows now and then
Glide o’er the face of that orb afar ?
Much do I wonder what they are.”

“ Ay, Anelida; the wise men say
That yon is a world like ours, and they
Would have us believe that beings there
Like unto us,—as wise, as fair,—

Are dwelling; but I think only Mars,
Of all the myriads of shining stars,
Folds to its breast an intelligent race,
And raises to heaven a living face.”

“ Hespera, thou art quick of speech;
Be not so hasty, I pray, to teach
That in all the universe, wide and vast,
The one germ of life on our orb was cast.”

ELVA; OR, THE SOUTH-WIND'S TALE

I

There is a valley, snugly closed
By sentinel hills around;
There the sunshine streams,
And the water gleams;
There the sunny stillness calm reposed,—
The south-wind the only sound,—
When wandering through it I heard a voice,
And I listened. Now sweet and clear,
And anon, like the breath of a mere
Wind, did it come; but it did rejoice
My heart, to hear it speak
Of a maiden, bright, but weak
And lonely, who lived in this valley fair,
And longed to fly to the purer air.
And this is the tale the south-wind told
Of the maiden's fate in the days of old.

II

The rising East was bathed in a crimson glow,
And inch by inch the Earth's dark shadow crept
Farther and farther into the West, where slept
Still soundly weary lands beneath its bow
Of night. The morning wind blew cool
And sweet o'er meadow and dreaming pool,
Rustling the leafy trees,
And tossing bright, waving seas
Of grass. Then softly one stole away

From her bed, uneasy with dreams
Too bright for her peace, or meseems,
Too vexed for her tender years,
Too harassed by lonely tears.
In the early dawn of the green Spring day,
Half-wakened, and dreamy with sleep,
She strayed by the whispering stream,
And watched the glad sunrise gleam
Golden on lofty steep,
Then bathe in its flood the glen,
And the dwellings of drowsy men.

III

Warmer and warmer grew the light;
Farther and farther retreated the night.
 Wrapped warm in the sunny air
 And the south-wind, Elva fair
 Lingered long by the streamlet's side.
In a brooding calm she wandered there,
And bent on the waters a musing stare,
 And viewed the heavens serene and wide,
Which, smiling above her,—deep and blue,
As if they never a shadow knew
Save the downy clouds that drifted slow
Across them,—seemed, in a voice so low
That dull-eared men would have heard no sound
 but the wind, to say:
 “Come, gentle soul, and let thine innocence
 Be safely folded in my love intense,
Before the stony, thirsty deserts line thy lonely way.”

IV

The maiden heard, and lifting up her face
In its dewy purity and youthful grace,
She gently answered: "Bear me, O sweet wind,
Up to the skies; we'll leave the earth behind,—
The earth, homely mother of my infancy;
Even as thou callest, beauteous Heaven,
To thine airy heights I'll gladly go with thee,
For to me a lonely lot is given.
There on thy loving breast
I'll lie in eternal rest."

V

She spoke, nor spoke again, nor ever more
Was Elva seen beside that dreamy shore.
Whence she vanished no one ever knew;
But the sunny south-wind the truth would slyly
tell,
And the secret smiled from the heavens blue.
At least, she was gone forever from that dell.
Yet in some sunny place,
Some serene and airy space,
I doubt not doth she dwell.

VI

And then, methought, when love here on this orb
Seeketh, unresting, for immortality,
Even as the heavens did her soul absorb
In their wide mystery, so with Love 'twill be.

KEEP MY FAITH!

O thou Unknown Power,
Whose mysterious sway my spirit feels, with awe:
E'en in my darkest hour,
Still grant me strength to read thy divine law
Of equal peace and joy for all;
Oh, keep my faith, whate'er befall!

Still let me see the light,
Far, far above me, where the sunny sky
Melts away before the sight;
Still let me feel that somewhere, lie
Fair morning lands of constant peace,
Where love and spring-time never cease!

THE ETERNAL MYSTERY

Life and life!—near, yet apart!
What the mystery
Which binds them thus, when heart on heart
Each longs to be,
One with another? Alas, in vain,
Through all the ages,
Have we chased joy and suffered pain,
Still divided pages!
Each yearns to blend with another; yet
Each separate stays;
All fruitlessly each strives to get
Within the maze.
What is life, that flows around us swift,

A turbid stream,
From whose distant banks the fogs ne'er lift,
Nor does a beam
Of sunshine melt the mist ahead
That guards the mouth,
Nor is a radiance freshly shed
O'er its lost youth?
Ah, me! The ages sing no lay
But only this,—
That what has been is gone away,
And that what is
Will not be soon, and what shall be
Soon will flee,
And what we've seen we'll no more see,
For the new will be.
But there's a voice within the heart
Whispering still,
That what now pains us will depart,
And that there will
Sometime be what we've longed for aye;
That yet the time
Shall come, the dawn of a brighter day,
In a sunnier clime.
With reason stern the voice combat,
And 'tis hushed;
Yet faith remains still, for all that,—
Never crushed.

THE UNIVERSE

See, all around us are moving myriad orbs,
Each a rolling world, like to our own, with seas,
Perhaps, and sunny skies, and verdant fields,
That fill the air with mingled sweet, fresh smells
Of sprouting herbs; with breathing, active forms
Of animal life, that roam the lands, or swim
The seas, or sail the heavens wide and free;
With beings full of intelligent fire, whose eyes
Glow with a thinking light and earnest mood;
With beauteous shapes it hurts the soul to see,—
Clad in the dangerous garment of mortal flesh;—
(We weep that it cannot last, what is so fair);—
Bright faces that smile a space and flit away,—
One moment warm with the soul's best glow, the
next

All quenched to ashes pale. Who knows what
lives

Have hung a doubtful period near the brink
Of death's dark chasm,—as do we all,—and then
Have fainted and fallen from the verge? what
pains,

What joys, what sorrows, what rewards, what
hopes,

What cold despair, what passions mad, what strong,
Wild wishes, sins, and evil deeds; what high,
Pure, noble depths of soul; what weakness sad,
That fell, too frail to fight; what mortal pangs
And yearnings, in those unknown worlds afar,
Have burned, have faded, glowed, and flickered,
till

That mystery that none may fathom stilled
Them all for aye?

There, where the glittering stars
Shine on our earth tonight like smiles that pierce
The awful blackness for friendly comfort's sake:
Look up, and tell me: do they not bring faith?—
Those pensive smiles, those peaceful smiles, those
smiles

That seem to speak of calmness wrested hard
From the grip of pain, and peace serene, at last
Won, spite of all that interposed between.
What worlds they seem to speak, those quiet
smiles,—

What worlds of sorrow, thought, and doubt, and
pain,

And flitting joy, that fluttered but to die,
Like a gaudy butterfly; and struggle grim,
And final triumph or defeat, and rest
Calm in the stillness of death, that silent broods
O'er millions of spirit-worlds, which, dying, burst
Aflame, and burn still bright, though ages since
Have passed! Where now the mortal beings, who
Once strived and sorrowed there, and sought for
joy,

And found a hollow void, or senseless clay,
As mortals must, in the stage 'twixt brutish flesh
Without the breath of spirit-life, and soul
Dissolved in the primal ether? Where
The life, the thought, the breath that filled the
whole

With meaning? All decayed in lumpish clay,
And burning on that gigantic funeral-pile,
The world that bore the living forms? All gone?

The men of science have cleared a little space
In the vast depths of the universe. The stars,
That have shown like lamps a-light in the dark sky
Through all the ages since the world began,
Still shine the same, but we know their distance
now,
Even how much matter in them is massed, and what
They consist of; whither they drift, what relations
stand
Amongst them; how they sometime have brighter
been,
Or dimmer; how orbs once hot glow no more;
How orbs once dark and dead now blaze with fire
Kindled by a sudden collision, world with world,
Perhaps. We know that a number far too great
For conception, of masses fiercely hot, and lumps
Cold and stiff, like the earth and the moon, and
clouds,—
Formless — vague — filling immeasurable space,—
Like Orion's nebula, and galaxies
Rich in new stars, white-hot from the forge of Time,
Are bound in a cluster huge, that twists its coils
Round the neck of Heaven, enclosing the Milky
Way,
With its dense star clusters, and shapeless nebulous
films
That glimmer afar with light of green or blue,
Awful in their vast distance;—there hanging huge,
Unmeasured, infinite to our eyes, the mass
Is floating onward, bearing us in its folds.
Yet there is a space beyond it we dimly see,
That holds in its lap yet other systems, great
As ours, or greater, mayhap,— we know not.
Far as we see, yet farther still there lies

More space to be pierced. We know that ages past
A different universe filled the rayless void
Of nothing that pens it in. We know that things,—
All things,—are changing now; that what has been
No longer is, and that what is will soon
Give o'er to still other forms we know not of.
We know that the Earth and her sister planets
round

Must one day unite with their parent sun again,—
Where shall we be then?—and that the whole
universe

May be massed together in one gigantic ball
Of matter, blazing through the depths of time,
And throwing a terrible light through the black
abyss

Of space. So much have the scientists shown us.
Yet

They have not ripped the veil from the face of
Truth,

For we know not yet the beginning of things, or the
end.

Beneath the shallow current of our life
Here on the earth,—its pleasures, pains, and aims,—
Lie the deep waters of thought and doubt's unrest;
And under all, is the firm, hard bed of faith.
Probe we, with our small strength, the depths of
space,

And we find no answer to that old question:
“Whence

Come we, and whither do we go?” Alas
For him “who strives to *know* where faith should
trust!”

For assurance to fainting hope and the strong
desire

That throbs and beats, and longs and longs and longs
For knowledge that shuts not out the hope of bliss,
And is never satisfied; to the eternal wish
To know all things, and far, far more, to find
A state of peace and tranquil happiness
And love, we *must* have faith to wait and trust.

THE WINTER'S PROMISE

“ I will bear ye onward
Through the darksome night,
Onward to the sunshine,
Onward to the light;
And though my breast is cold,
And though my face is old,
Still I'm a faithful guide
To the place where ye'd abide,
And I will surely make
The journey ye would take.”

“WHAT IS BETTER THAN SUCCESS?”

What is better than success?
To do your duty,
Strive your best, without selfishness,—
There is beauty!
Say with Odin, “ I will fight,
Though I'm to fall!”
Just to struggle for the right
Is best of all.

NO, NOT A CYNIC

A cynic, do you ask me? No, not quite!
A cynic would feel not gladness in that light
That dips the trees and the grass and everything
In a golden glow. The wind-song would not bring
Sweet hope with it, from memory's sunlit hours
Of musing o'er the new-born wildwood flowers,
Or from the future, however wild and strange
It seemeth, since all earth's things forever change.
There is sadness in the wind, but there is sweet
As well. Would that everyone might as gladly
greet
That sound, as I! But to many and many, I know,
It brings but sorrow to hear that sighing low.

THE LOST GLORY

I

A roseate glory glimmering from afar,
A warm, rich light empurpling rich-clad boughs;
More dazzling radiance gleaming in every star,
Where they shine, gem-like, on Night's soft,
dusky brows;
A west-wind blowing wide and free and cool,
Sweeping o'er valley and hill with deep-toned
voice;
Heaven's dear face reflected in every pool,—
Bright mem'ries of childhood, how they my
heart rejoice!

II

Then the strong wind spoke to my heart of heroic
deeds;
Then noble shapes were companions in my
dreams;
Then I walked with those who sowed in my soul the
seeds
Of courage and faith when Hope has hid her
beams;
Then I slowly strayed through the green and blos-
soming fields
Of Spring, through the Summer's fierce and
panting heat,
Through Autumn's woods, where the gay leaf the
acorn shields,
O'er the icy hills with the wintry tempests beat;

III

And my heart quailed not at the thought of dismal
death,
And a body in darkness lonely rotting away;
Young life ran warm in my veins, and warm was
my breath,
And in friendship closely knit were the soul and
the clay.
But the winds called loud, as they're calling even
now,
Not with wail or sigh, but a mystic, moving force
Calling me on, and I follow, or swift or slow;
And I follow, till Time shall have ticked my
earthly course.

IV

“ The glory shall come again,” my Spirit cries,
But her voice is muffled oft in my tired brain;
I hear her faintly, she only sobs and sighs,
And adds with her weeping to anxious life’s sad
pain.
Yet again, in the silence, she calls, and I hear her
then,
And my Faith sleeps as sweetly as child of Joy
ever slept;
She bides in my breast unafraid, as in breasts of
men
She must ever abide, while the ashes of glory are
kept.

V

Death is a passing, another turn of Change,
That rolls from our sight forever the friends we
love;
From our sight forever, we say, for our bodies
derange
The delicate vision our souls brought down from
above.
We see them not; but they hover still in our dreams,
And their wings brush our faces as o’er us they
nightly bend;
And patient they wait, till for us the glory gleams
Once again, and we too know the bliss of life
without end.

WHEN HOPE IS GONE

MORAL: Yield not to Despair,
But fight him in his lair,
As Great-Heart did!
Beyond thy trammled view
Gleams a city fair and true,
Though its light is hid!

Fast fell the snow. A slender girl, ill-clad,
And wan with want, and stooping low, and sad
Of face, strove hard against the wintry blast.
Shivering, and drawing tight her shawl, she passed
Along the lonely road. On right and left,
Moaning as their bleak branches were wrenched
and reft

By the winds, dark woods rose high. And gleam-
ing afar,
Bright lights of a city shone, each a twinkling star
In the stormy night's void blackness; now fair and
clear

As morning hope in life's one happy year,
Now swallowed up in the hollow wind's loud roar,—
Now bright—now dim—now certain—now no
more,—

And the wanderer's one haven, Hope, is fled.
“ Ah, well for me, indeed, were I now dead
And at rest at last, rather than wandering here,
Alone in the cold—O God!—all that was dear,
All, all gone now, and this black night blinding me,
So never a ray of hope can my poor eyes see!
That city, 'tis a dream,—a cruel dream
That mocks me,—for it anon doth refuge seem,

And then is vanished, with all my hope of rest.
I wander here alone, and sad oppressed
With doubt and fear, sudden hope and wishes vain,
Weariness of body and of brain,
Loneliness, love-longing, life's despair
Of a life to be lived in a purer and sunnier air!—
Alone, alone, no shelter, aid, or hope
To strengthen my lagging steps!—O dark sky, ope
But a slit in thy gloomy vault, that one little ray
Of Heaven's sunshine may promise another day,—
Blest assurance that this black night will not last
for aye!
O wood, that weepest and wailest and groanest
always,
O cavernous wood, so dark and deep, art thou
The only companion of my journey now?
I shall never reach the city.—Alas, it gleams
Full bright! From afar the mock of hot hearth-
lights streams,
That draws me to my doom! The grave yawns
wide,
A huge, black gulf, 'twixt me and that blest side
Of this raging river; the fleeting phantom calls,
Beckons me toward its safe and sheltering walls,
But I never shall reach it. Nay, here the black
waters swirl
At my feet, and the city's beyond; no matter; hurl
Me swift to the death!—Ha, ha!—Naught's be-
yond; naught's here,
Save the wind and the storm and the wood with its
branches sere!
Swift, swift!—Stop this brain!—Ah!—I drink the
deep waters down,

And beneath them—alone and unmourned—I sink
and drown!—

Help, help!—My breath!—Oh, let me breathe again!
Come quickly, death!—Oh—come, put an end to
this pain!—

Ah!—a quiet rocking to and fro—

A babe in cradle—slower and more slow—

Blest sleep—bright dreams—my mother's dear,
loving face—

A breathless instant hanging in middle space—

A silence—a strangeness—a calling, louder than
life,

Yet soundless—a blind, bewildered, gentle strife,

As one waking from a deep sleep—a swimming of
light—

A confusion of heavenly shapes—everything,
bright—

An instinctive gladness—a wonder—a presence dear

Unseen, yet felt to be loved, and ever near—

Then peace." The city is found; the darksome
night

Gone and forgot; somewhere in th' unclouded
light

Of the pure, ethereal heavens, a spirit blest

No longer is vainly seeking a place of rest.

GLIMMERINGS THROUGH THE MIST

A rosy gleam, a glory throwing
A wavering brightness from afar!
A fleeting flash of olden sunshine
And rays of whiter-sparkling star!

A richly purple mist uprising
O'er green hill-slopes bathed in sun!
A sweeter gush of fresher waters,
That in clearer rivulets run!

A drowsy murmur of the breezes,
Cool and soft and silvery-sweet,
As through the air's pure crystal clearness
Swift they glide on winged feet!

Hush! A faint, uncertain waving,
As of something in the air!
A dim sense of some dear presence,
Unseen in the ether there!

A loving and a glad communion
With the silence brooding o'er!—
Glimmerings, these, of life's lost morning,
Half-remembered dreams of yore.

Fair, indeed, these fleeting glimpses
Through the vista of the past,
When our present path is stony,
And with storm-clouds overcast!

Is the way before us darkened ?
Is the future veiled from view ?
Yet those bright lands we remember
Fade in the farther distance blue.

Past and future meet together
In the present's narrow span,
Seeming but a precarious foothold
To the timid heart of man.

Yet the sun still shines above us,
And the ground is firm beneath,
And,—before, behind,—the mountains
Folded are in a dim-bright sheath.

Nearer draw and parts the curtain,
Clears away the shimmering mist;
Tenderly the verdant-sloping,
Dewy hills with sun are kissed.

Does a fog sometime hang o'er us ?
Does a storm o'ersweep the sun ?
Still we know, beyond are lying
Smiling lands no clouds have won:

Even thus, when the night-hung valley
Closes us in wintry breath,
Yet a little way walk onward,
And we pass the shadow of Death.

And why fear we for the future,
When the friend of all most dear
Walks beside us in the spirit,—
All our lives is ever near ?

First felt in the gentle stirrings
Of the air in life's bright morn,
Now, as grows the soul in wisdom,
Consciousness of her is born.

Warmly wrapping up our hearts here,
Immortal Love shall bear us on
Past the gate to Death's dark valley,
Whither those we mourn have gone.

Fear ye not! The sun will never
Cease to shine in spirit-land!
And still, through dimly golden vistas,
We'll walk with young Love, hand-in-hand!

Still the past, and still the future
Shall recede before our view,
But the gently blowing breezes
Blend the old airs with the new!

ATHEISM

The land where Atheist dwells is known
To many and many, these days, I'll own.
I have been there, too; well I know the way
To that land so cold, and stern, and gray.
Yet now I've 'scaped it, and stand without,
And hear heavenly music round about;
So now I would tell ye, ye that stay,
How ye may ope the gate and away.
Ye're armed with Reason; Reason blocks your way;
Then with Reason must we endeavor to shake your
sway.

We must show that the very highest Reason of all
Is the Faith that waits and works,—or stand,—
or fall.

Oh, say ye, doubters, that this universe,
With all its varied hosts of living forms,
With all the intelligent mortals made of clay,
Who are born, and grow, and strive, and feel, and
think,
And love—ah, love!—and long for eternity
With the same deep yearning through all the years
of time,—

Is ruled by chance alone ? drifts pilotless ?
Is a chaos, heaped together causelessly
By no wise master, and for no purpose great ?
Oh, say ye that this good ship listlessly
Veers with the wind, upon the open sea,
Nor seeks a port; but idly drifts through space
And time, dooming its freight of human hopes
To destruction and everlasting death ?

Is there

No aim at all, no spirit in the mass ?
Are we so helpless, chained, and bound to earth,
That we must perish for aye in the wreck of worlds,
And life cease being ? Is there, then, no soul,
No spirit ?

We know that life is something. Where
It is not, lumpy matter heavily lies,
Moved by no will, commanded by no thought.
This something is quite intangible; that we know,
For when one dies, no part of the body is ta'en,
The weight is the same. For ages we've stood
agreed

That the soul, if it exists, is thinner than air,—

A nothing—a thought—an idea we cannot grasp.
Deny its existence? Then what, ah, what, is life,
And what is death?

Is the body a mere machine,
Grinding out thoughts and deeds while unim-
paired,

Weakening with long use, and friction, and rust,
Till at last its busy wheels are stilled in death?
Perhaps so; very likely. And is the brain
But one of the parts of this strangest of machines?
Very likely, again. But what of the thoughts that
come

Unsummoned by any need of earthly life?—
Thoughts of eternity, so wide and vast
That the brain is bewildered by them; of divinity,
Glorious, omnipotent, lighting up
All the world of souls with its radiance;
Of love that lives when all the stars are dim,
And finds in the light of God a tranquil peace;
Of growth from the tiny seed of immortal life,
Through all the stages of its sojourn in clay,
Up to the perfect spirit, that has its all
In love?

Ah, me! 'tis strange we are burdened thus
For no reason at all; 'tis strange that we should die
And be buried here in the ground, with all our
hopes!

If there is a soul, why should it die? We know
That at death, the clay returns to clay; the dust,
To dust. There is a natural law which states
That matter can never be destroyed: then why,
Oh, why, should we think that spirit can be de-
stroyed?

Will not the same law hold? Our scientists say

That matter may change its form: that wood is
burned,

And remains in ashes or flies away in smoke,

But still the same amount of matter exists.

Thus when the body decays, 'tis given back

To the earth or the air, and exists yet, though re-
solved

Into its elements: may not, also, the soul

Be resolved and purified, yet live through all

Eternity?

Let that discussion rest.

'Tis merely a theory, put forth full oft.

Foundations hath it, perhaps—enough. We know,

We *know*, that from the remotest traces left

Of life's existence on our earth, its growth

Hath gradual been, but never-ceasing; thus,

From the tiny, helpless, microscopic germ

Of protoplasm,—the ameba, or the first

Vegetable, indistinguishable, almost,

From some of the lowest forms of animal life,—

Through ages of fossil creatures that lived and died,

Through the age of the wingèd serpent, the mam-
moth huge,

The tropical vegetation o'erspreading the earth—

The slimy seas, the monsters of the deep,

The unformed continents lying beneath the waves—

Through age on age ascending, climbing higher,—

Stretch up to us two long, unbroken lines:

One, plants; the other, animals; and last,

That animal most wondrous of them all,—

Man,—who in his pride will scarcely own

The name of his class.

Is all this goodly growth,—

This seeming development of a lofty plan,

Pointing up to no less than divinity,—
To die on the planet that gave it birth, and leave
No trace, in spirit-existence,—life,—of all
It hath been? Oh, then, what a loss! Even we
can see

Much better use for so much good material.
How useless and wasted, all noble sentiments,
If destined, anon, to exist no more! Oh, no,
'Tis folly to be so wise, if wisdom it be
That brings such a dark conclusion! Let me be
Content to feel that there is a soul, and, too,
That the soul is immortal!

Granting there is a soul,
And that 'tis immortal, then doth the question come:
Can we think that all these souls just grow and flit
By chance or their own sweet will? that everything
Just happens in the spiritual world? Not so
Is it in the world of matter: natural laws,—
So we call them,—determine the courses of the stars
And the planets, to a hair's breadth; nothing is left
To chance. Were it so, the moon would fall in the
earth,

The earth in the sun, and all the stars would soon
Be struggling in chaos. Then why should we
doubt

That the spirit-world, as well, is ruled by laws
Unchangeable as gravitation itself?
And if laws there be to govern, whence do they
come?

We may not believe in a personal God, as did
The Greeks and the Romans in days of old; and
yet

Some power, we feel, must be at the helm, if the bark
Is to steer safe into a definite port. Then what?

Divinity—mere spirit without form,
Almighty as no personal God could be,
Full of power, and goodness, and love, and light,
Yet after all mere spirit without form—
We cannot apprehend; the thought's too vast,
Too abstract, for us to grasp. Yet can we see,
Dimly, something of this; our straining minds,
Yearning to clasp the infinite, catch some ray
Of its distant glory, imperfect as they are.
Humility is better here than pride.
We understand enough, methinks, to know
Our own great ignorance. When we see that,—
Comprehend—admit—it,—then we know
That Reason had better put on a Quaker garb,
And cease to vaunt her glories; keep beside
Her sister, Faith, so meek, serene, and calm;
And fly no longer in the face of God,
Till her waxen wings are melted with the heat,
And down she plunges, like Icarus, in the sea
Of dark Despair. Then see we, too, 'tis best,—
Wisest,—to believe that a master spirit rules,
Whose vastness can suck up the little drops
We are, as the sky sucks up the dew. 'Tis best
To believe a beneficent mind is planning good;
Cherishing purposes that eclipse the stars
With their splendor; shielding all with equal love;
And nursing the little germs of life, till full
Development they reach. How can we be
Content to believe, for a moment, that this life
here,—
So often a failure, so short of perfection aye,
So burdened with sorrows often, and loaded with
cares,

So far below what we picture in our dreams,—
Is all ? or that it must perish forever ? or that
There can be a universe all drifting on
Forever, and not for the sake of Eternal Right ?
Oh, good *must* conquer, and we *must* live, though
long

The way, and dark, to the blessed home of Truth !
Reason is good, for she shows us oft the way
Through caverns dark with superstitious fear,
Or over mountains, piled of earth, or streams
Boiling with passion, or icy with prejudice.
Reason is good; we praise her none too oft,
For by her search-light thrown o'er all the seas
Of darkness dangerous the passing years
Have come to wreck upon, we see the rocks
They stumbled over, steer with greater care,
And safely 'scape them; by her guidance, too,
We sail into the future, and avoid
Much that others have found of danger there.
Reason is good; never let us desert
Her beacon, for she guides us well, not ill.
But let us be not rash, lest some false guide
May don her face and voice, and sink us deep
Beneath the waters of Despondency.
Reason is good, but she dwells with her sister, Hope
And she is far too just to spit at Faith,
And call her vixen, traitor, weakling, fool,
Because she wears a meeker garb, and seems,
Blind though she is, to see a heavenly light.
Reason is good, but Hope is better still,
And Faith is best of all, for she makes us firm
In our trust that all that is wrong will be righted
at last;
And strong to battle till this life's cares are past.

Then hail! all hail! Rejoice we as one heart,
As light we go upon our several ways!
Each one of us has his own especial part
In carrying out the plan our race to raise!
Trust on, work on! No thought or labor's wasted
That tends to elevate us toward perfection!
Come on, my friends, ye who have bitter tasted,
We'll set our faces all in one direction!
Cheerily, cheerily, sing as we go!
Divinity's destined for us here below!
On to the work! Onward, on!
Whither the best before us have gone!
Forward, march! Keep step and time!
We'll take our rest in a sunnier clime!
Rescue the guilty, cheer the sad,
Heal the sick, and rejoice with the glad!
Keep still in the line, and onward still,
Till at last we reach the top o' the hill,
And breathe a bit in the rarer air,
Ere we must melt in the ether there!
Hark to the peal of the organ-chimes!
Do they not speak of diviner times?
Slow and solemn; slow
And sweetly solemn! Oh,
Methinks, from angels flow
Such harmonies as they go!
The silent tears will start
From the depths of the hardened heart,
To hear those solemn tones,—
Those sweetly solemn tones.
Oh, bliss of God indeed,
Stirring in Thy seed!

Peace—and rest—at last,
When this life's cares are past!
“ In ocean's cave still safe with Thee,
The germ of immortality!”

GOOD-NIGHT

Good-night!

The parting day hath ta'en its light
And left us; now the dark hours keep
Watch o'er the weary world asleep.

May thy dreams, my love, be bright!
Good-night!

Good-night!

Truth will win, and Love, and Right.
Slumber sweetly, care-oppressed!
God is watching o'er your rest.

May thy dreams, my love, be bright!
Good-night!





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